Minutes of the
ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2011

The regular meeting of the Alameda Free Library Board was called to order at 6:05pm.

ROLL CALL   Present: Catherine Atkin, President
                                           Nancy Lewis, Vice President
                                           Suzanne Whyte, Board Member
                                           Michael Hartigan, Board Member
                                           Gail Wetzork, Board Member

                            Absent: None

                            Staff: Jane Chisaki, Library Director
                                           Christina Baines, Recording Secretary

CONSENT CALENDAR

An asterisk indicates items so enacted or adopted on the Consent Calendar.

A.   *Report from the Library Director Highlighting Activities for the Month of November 2011.

B.   Corrected Draft Minutes of the Regular Library Board Meeting of November 9, 2011. Board Member Hartigan noted the minutes did not reflect discussions covered under new business items, and requested that be corrected, as well as the adjournment paragraph. Draft Minutes of the Regular Library Board Meeting of December 14, 2011.

C.   *Library Services Report for the Month of October 2011.

D.   *Financial Report Reflecting FY12 Expenditures by Fund for November 2011.

E.   *Bills for Ratification for the Month of November 2011.

Board Member Whyte arrives at 6:09pm.

Board Member Wetzork made a motion, seconded by Board Member Whyte, to adopt the items excluding the draft minutes. The minutes will be corrected as requested.   The motion was carried by a 5-0 vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Library Strategic Plan/Update (J. Chisaki).   Following the Board's direction, Strategic Plan Goals 3 and 7 were presented for discussion: The Board approved the format presented by the Library Director.   Director Chisaki indicated that a materials count is currently underway at the Libraries to determine in-house use/survey to confirm staff's belief that the library is as busy as it was prior to cuts in hours and staff and to confirm circulation numbers.

President Atkin requested a breakdown of each of the items for discussion and asks the Board if they would like to talk about them; the Board agreed.

GOAL 3: VISITORS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES WILL HAVE SAFE, WELCOMING, AND COMFORTABLE SPACES TO USE THE LIBRARIES' RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS AND TO INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER.

Objective 1: Eighty-five percent of Alameda residents will express in a community survey that the neighborhood libraries are safe, welcoming, and comfortable spaces.

The Library has not conducted a survey. The Library does not have the funding to conduct a survey similar to the one used during the strategic planning process. It may be possible to do a "Survey Monkey" online survey at a future date. The City has conducted so many online surveys in the past few weeks that the community may be tired of online surveys. In-house surveys always produce overwhelming positive results because you are "preaching to the choir."

Objective 2: Attendance at the neighborhood libraries as measured by door count will increase by 10% per year.

Full year statistics are not available and it was recently discovered that the door counters at all three locations probably are working properly. One of the counters at the West End Library is mounted just high enough that many children are not counted!

Discussion: Board Member Hartigan asked for an explanation as to why the door counters were not working. Director Chisaki explained the counters work off of an electric eye. The counters are not good quality, and they count coming and going, so the total numbers are cut in half.   Some counters are plugged into light switches, and when the switch is turned off the counter resets. Also, at the West End Branch the "eye" was located at a level too high to count young children. We are looking for better quality counters to more efficiently track our numbers. Board Member Hartigan expressed concern with the steady fall in numbers, and suggested to find an alternative count method. Further inquired about the number of reads of the counters per month.   President Atkin also suggested the hours of operation should be taken into consideration and attendance of programs. Also, it may seem busier because of the cut in hours and the number of people visiting the libraries, the attendance and the use of the collection? In response to President Atkin's concerns, Director Chisaki clarified that programs are not driven by numbers and funding, but by staffs' interests and community input. Board Member Hartigan suggested documenting the number of programs; but understand we do have budget issues and concerns, and then later can come back to Council and indicate this is what the community wants. Do not just add it so we can meet our goal and go on to the next one. Board member Whyte

suggested that the in-house poll might show that the numbers may be down because people are using the library in the traditional sense, as a reference, and actually not removing the resources from the library.

Objective 3: Use of the neighborhood library collections will increase by 10% per year.

The collections at both neighborhood libraries are being re-balanced. The experiment of having primarily adult fiction at one location and non-fiction at the other, has failed. This will be re-examined after the collections are redistributed. The fiction collection is growing at the West End and the non-fiction collection at the Bay Farm Island Library needs to be adjusted before a true count can be taken.

Discussion: Board Member Hartigan: What is the percentage change at the Neighborhood Libraries? Director Chisaki reported it is down about 21% for adults and steady for childrens' use. Overall, Bay Farm is pretty flat, Main and Went End have gone down. When we reopened branches, WEB had mostly non-fiction and BFI had mostly fiction for adults. We have since made the entire collection floating as a way to rebalance the collection.   Board Member Whyte's question pertained to stack space and the reconfiguration of the libraries, could the decrease be because of the lack of stack space? Director Chisaki responded that in the beginning it definitely contributed, but with the floating collection it will balance out.   Board Member Hartigan indicated that where as the number of programs is of lesser importance to him; this one is of more importance to him. It should increase, not go down, this should be starred.   The Board agreed this is a very important item and needs to be followed closely.

Objective 4: The number of programs offered at neighborhood libraries will increase by 5% per year.

This is going to be difficult to accomplish, particularly for adult programs. Any programs will have to take place during open hours as the library does not have enough staffing to accommodate after-hours programming. More children's programs have been scheduled at the neighborhood libraries, but this has been made possible thanks to the budget made available by the Friends of the Library and the ability of the Supervising Children's Librarian being able to leave the Main Library to conduct the programs at another site. If staffing is further reduced children's programs will either have to conducted by on-site staff or be a "purchased" program presented by an outside entity.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide library visitors with remodeled or redesigned libraries in which to use the resources and attend programs. **West End Library completed October, 2010; Bay Farm Island Library completed March, 2011.**

2. Provide library visitors with comfortable seating in which to read and relax.   **New or re-finished furnishings provided at both neighborhood libraries, thanks in part to a $100,000 donation from the Friends of the Library.**

3. Provide library users with an attractive display area for new books or themed displays.   **Both neighborhood libraries have a "new book" area and staff has been creating themed book displays as appropriate.**

4. Provide library visitors with additional computers at the neighborhood libraries. **Both neighborhood libraries increased the number of computer work stations for children and adults in the remodel process. However staff observation at the Bay Farm Island Library is not the need for more computer workstations but more seating/study tables. Rarely, if ever, are all the desktop workstations in use. Many customers bring in their own laptops and are seeking table and chairs to use with the wireless. Staff is currently considering decreasing the number of public computers in favor of offering study table space.**

Discussion: Board Member Hartigan requested further information on this item. Director Chisaki explained that staff is proposing four computers be removed and placed in reserve. This would allow an open table for patrons visiting with their own laptops. Board Member Hartigan clarified that there would still be two computers available with the Library catalog.

GOAL 7: ALAEMEDANS WILL BE ABLE TO MORE EASILY AND EFFECTIVELY CONNECT TO THE ONLINE WORLD.

Objective 1: Use of databases will increase by 10% each year. **There has been a decrease of about 25% in usage. In 2009-10 the average numbers of searches were 30,069; decreasing to 22,974 in 2010-11; and 10,327 for the first four months in 2011-12. This decrease may be attributed to the change in web page format. The databases are more difficult to locate as a user needs to know to look for "eResources" in the navigation bar to be directed to a page with other digital content items, and then click on "databases" to find the desired database. The direct link to databases for children and teens was removed and all databases were lumped together in alphabetical format rather than user group.**

Discussion: Director Chisaki described a mobile application coming soon which will allow users to search from their cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc. Library patrons will be able to access their account, renew their books, download e-books, get into databases without having to reauthenticate each time, because they will have done so with the application, and we hope that will help with our database use because it will be right there at their fingertips.

Objective 2: Each year, the number of unique visitors to the library portal web pages will increase by 10%. **The Library has little data on the number of unique visitors. Aggregate statistics are available for about the past 11 months (last six months of FY10-11 and the first five months of FY11-12). According to Supervising Librarian David Hall, the bounce rate for the library web site is high at +60%. This is not a satisfactory bounce rate even if some of the traffic is not completely leaving the library but going to another URL for the library's web catalog. This could be that the library web site does not have the information desired by the user or the information is there but is not easy to locate. Web page redesign and marketing of the web page may help increase customer usage and lower the bounce rate.**

Objective 3: The majority of Alameda residents will express in a community survey customer satisfaction with library technology. **We have not conducted a satisfaction survey.**

Objective 4: Uptime for all computer systems will be 95% on an ongoing basis. **"Computer systems" means the hardware servers and the associated software applications has been operating at a +95% level. This includes Horizon (circulation software); HIP (human interaction proof – provides graphics); WebReporter (report manager); TM3 (telephone notification for notices); SIP (session initiation protocol – interface between the RFID system & public access to the main system, and other applications); mail server (email notification); and the public access servers. There are differentials with a 99% uptime for combinations of services such as Horizon and HIP, and lower levels for other hardware/software combinations. This uptime analysis does not include peripherals such as PC's, thin clients, monitors, keyboards, etc. as much of these hardware pieces have been replaced within the last two years and are replaced on a continuing basis as necessary.**

Discussion: Director Chisaki reported that we meet our 95% uptime.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide classes for the public on database use.

The Technology Resource Services division was created in FY10-11. A PT Librarian was hired to create and conduct programs/classes and to assist the public with technology issues on the public floor. The School Resource Services (SRS) division provides in-classroom demonstrations of database instruction for grade level/curriculum appropriate databases. Classes in basic computer use; internet searching; self-paced computer instruction; Overdrive instruction; social networking; job search skills; digital photography; library catalog; among others, are offered in the computer lab on a continuing basis using both volunteer and staff instructors.

Discussion: Providing classes as best we can, the classes are full.   A social networking class was cancelled due to lack of attendance in mid-December. It was scheduled right before the holidays and the couple of people who had signed up were contacted.   The SRS Linda Valler is doing an amazing job, we have reached record number of people, and buying her the mini laptop and projector was money well spent.   The children get really excited to see the live demonstration.

2. Run a "did you know?" campaign (did you know you can get reading recommendations through the AFL website, you can practice for the GED online, etc.).

Classes for database instruction are provided along with the associated publicity for class sign-ups. Most classes are full enrollment. Recently a flyer promoting database use was created for the Career Section of the library. The Boys & Girls Department has created a rotating notice board for children's databases, services, and programs, however it is new enough that we don't know if it's had an impact or not.

Discussion: Director Chisaki explained some of the benefits of this database. For example, if you take a civil service test the database will track your progress. Log in and create an account, take the test over and over, and watch for improvements.

3. Provide pathfinders to online resources and other electronic services.

This is an on-going project. One pathfinder has been created to promote "Learning Express Library," a database that offers practice tests for a variety of skills / grade levels. The Reference Department is in the process of creating more simple pathfinders for the library databases.

Discussions: Reference is providing guides to resources.

Follow-up questions/Comments: Board Member Hartigan would like to see the database use promoted or whatever the Board can do to really drive that into a positive direction, it is a really important objective of this category. The other are of concern for him is visitors on the website, but at this point, maybe there is nothing that can be done until it is changed. And at that point, then really advertise and highlight the databases.   Vice President Lewis agreed. President Atkin stated she likes Board Member Hartigan's idea, the branches, like a new restaurant, when you reopen it, you really have to reengage and be happy that you went back there, you have to consciously build it back up. Board Member Wetzork indicated the information has to be easily accessible, not everyone is computer literate.   President Atkin expressed appreciation of the information and of the format it was presented, seconded by Board Member Whyte.

NEW BUSINESS

A.   Alameda Free Library Foundation (J. Chisaki)   Director Chisaki reported the Foundation is working really hard to sell out the concert and are confident.   Raintree Studio is taking photos for them.

B.   Friends of the Alameda Free Library (K. Minney) Director Chisaki reported the Friends are desperately looking for recipes for; if they do not receive 100 the project will fail.

C.   Patron Suggestions/Comments (Speak-Outs) and Library Director's Response. None

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA (Public Comment)

There were no members of the public present.

LIBRARY BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

President Atkin attended the Amanda King concert; reported she is over the top with an amazing voice.

Vice President Lewis shared a photo of the Library Board Members at the Energy Kiosk dedication on October 6, 2011, Alameda Municipal Power included in their November power bill.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Request consideration to discontinue the $5.00 ILL fee and restore service and goodwill to the Alameda Free Library customers.   Also the Art Committee will not be submitting a policy for consideration, if one is needed, I will craft one.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Atkin adjourned the meeting at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Chisaki, Library Director and
Secretary to the Alameda Free Library Board